

Route 1

- **Tour:** Polluce
- **Starting point:** Palermo
- **Arrival:** Agrigento
- **Points of interest:** Corleone - Selinunte
Eraclea Minoa - Valle dei Templi
- **Km:** 233



Travel across Sicily from North to South through one of the most suitable itineraries for motorcycles, up to the "African" coast of the island where you will discover beautiful Greek remains.

■ **History and traditions:**

Palermo

The patron saint of Palermo is Santa Rosalia, who is still widely venerated. On 14th of July, people in Palermo celebrate the "Festino", which is the most important religious event of the year. The Festino is a procession in the main street of Palermo to remember the miracle attributed to Santa Rosalia who, it is believed, freed the city from the Black Death in 1624. The cave where the bones of Santa Rosalia were discovered, is on Monte Pellegrino (see above): when her relics were carried around the city three times, the plague was lifted. There is a Santuario marking the spot and can be reached via a scenic bus ride from the city below.

Corleone

Corleone is a small town in the province of Palermo. The name of the town was also used as surname of the main character in Mario Puzo's book and Francis Ford Coppola's film, The Godfather. The father of Michael Corleone (played by Al Pacino), Don Vito (played by Marlon Brando in The Godfather and Robert DeNiro in The Godfather, Part II) emigrated to the United States from Corleone. In real life, Pacino's grandparents emigrated from the town of Corleone in the same generation as Don Vito Corleone does in the film.

The Mother Church dedicated to St. Martin Bishop was initiated in the late 1300's. Its present look is the result of numerous changes and refurbishments. Its interior has nave and aisles divided into various chapels containing precious art pieces.

Selinunte

According to the Athenian historian Thucydides, Selinunte was founded by people from Megara Hyblaea, a city on the east coast of Sicily, in the 7th century BC. The city had a very short life (about 200 years). During this time its population grew to a total of about 25,000. A wealthy trade center, Selinunte was envied by the Carthaginians. Selinunte had an almost permanent conflict with Segesta, which allied itself with Athens. However, the Athenians were defeated by the Syracusans, and Segesta now asked help from Carthage. Diodorus Siculus tells that the Carthaginian commander Hannibal (not to be confused with his more famous

namesake), in 409 BC destroyed Selinunte after a war that counted about 16,000 deaths and 5,000 prisoners. The city was besieged for nine days by an army of 100,000 Carthaginians.

Agrigento

The Valley of the Temples rises southernmost, on the traces of the old town and includes many temples built in the 5th century BC.

Walking along the path you can find:

- The temple of Concorde; the only temple still standing in its whole.
- The temple of Castor and Pollux; tributed to Leda and Zeus's twins.
- The temple of Olympian Zeus
- was built in the 5th century BC and dedicated to Zeus
- The temple of Heracles; was built to commemorate the soldiers died during the Second Punic War.
- The temple of Hera Lacinia (Giunone)

■ Sightseeing and Landscape:

Palermo

Palermo was once an Arabian emirate and later the seat of a Norman kingdom.

There are still Arabian style alleyways, busy fish markets, wonderful churches, excellent food and vibrant people. ...there is plenty to see.

In this jewel you can see a beautiful church like La Martorana This is Palermo's most famous church. It has an Arab-Norman bell tower. The interior is decorated with Byzantine mosaics. Cappella Palatina

In Piazza Indipendenza is a Byzantine mosaic decorated chapel. Inside it is possible to visit King Roger's former bedroom with its 12th century mosaics.

Palermo is also famous for its typical popular market: the "Vucciria". These open air markets are very loud and fun!. Here fishmonger stands have piles of swordfish and sea urchins. Other vibrant street markets with food and secondhand-junk stalls are in Ballarò.

....Sicily is above all passion for the life!

Ficuzza

Close to Palermo there is Ficuzza, an interesting naturalistic place.

The road that seems is designed from a motorcyclist. A suggestion: guide, then return behind and stop to relax between the trees and the nature.

The Bosco della Ficuzza is one of the richest and charmer woods in Sicily. King Ferdinand of Bourbon himself in the late 16th century made Ficuzza his hunting lodge. The vegetation is highly varied comprising oaks, ashes, cork-oaks, maples; it is home to a rich wildlife including small mammals, countless species of birds and wild-boars. Some buildings, among which is the Palazzina Reale, also lie amidst the wood.

...continuing for Corleone you could follow a small shunting line and visit the sanctuary of the Madonna of the Rosary of Tagliavia, goal of pilgrimages.

Selinunte

Selinunte is an ancient Greek archaeological site in the south province of Trapani. Selinunte is the modern Italian name for the ancient Selinunte.

The archaeological site contains five temples centered on an acropolis.

Agrigento

Its origins are very ancient and notably Agrigento still offers the enchanting view of a presumably sacred area built when Greeks landed there to start the civilisation of Magna Graecia.

The remains include some temples, in strategic position on the peak of several hills around the town, dominating the valley (famous as the Valle dei Templi "Valley of temples"). The valley is known for the pervasive yet pleasant scent of orange flowers (locally called zagare) that bloom in spring.

In a poor village close to Agrigento, the Contrada Xaos (which means Chaos), was born perhaps the most famous Italian dramatist, Luigi Pirandello.
